



The Job Interview

When you receive an invitation to interview for a job, chances are the employer believes you meet the minimum qualifications for the job based on the information from your resume and/or application. Congratulations!

The job interview is a good time for the employer to gain some more information from you and to see if you are a good fit for the job. It is also a good time for you to see if the organization is a good fit for you!

The key to a great interview is to prepare in advance:

Practice answering typical job interview questions. Focus on incorporating positive information about your skill set and ways that hiring you will benefit the company into your answers.

Questions that May Come Up:

- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why do you want this job?
- Tell me about yourself.

Research the organization. It will impress the employer if you know something about the organization's products, services, etc. Simply check out their web site to find this information. It is easy to find most employers' web sites by using a search engine such as Google.com—you just type the employer's name into the search engine.

Gather any documents you might need such as a copy of your resume, your driver's license, school transcripts, certifications, examples of your work, etc. You should also bring a pen and paper in case you need to take notes or write down information.

Your appearance is important. Dress a step above what you would be wearing on the job. Make sure you appear neat and professional for the job interview. Get a good night's sleep the night before the interview so you look and feel your best. Always turn off your cell phone!

Make sure you know the location of the interview. You don't want to be flustered or late because you got lost driving there. Arrive about ten minutes early for the interview. You don't want to be too early and you certainly don't want to be late. If you are going to be late, make sure you call and let them know.

When you arrive for the interview:

Always be professional and polite to everyone you meet. The receptionist may informally provide an opinion to the interviewers after you leave.

Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake. You don't want your handshake to be bone-crushing or limp.

Make eye contact with the interviewer and smile. Show that you are confident and excited to be there. Try to avoid saying words like "um."

Be aware of your body language. Sit up straight in your chair and keep your hands in your lap. Don't fold your arms, put your hands in your pockets, crack your knuckles, tap a pen or play with your hair.

Listen carefully to the questions and respond positively and honestly. Focus on your qualifications and what you can bring to the job. It is OK to ask them to repeat the question or to take a few seconds to think about your response. Don't talk about what the organization can do for you. Always answer the question that is being asked. Don't ramble on or talk about your personal life. Demonstrate a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

Always ask the interviewer at least one question at the end of the interview. This shows you are interested in the job. Do not ask questions that focus on you such as the pay, benefits, vacation time, etc. You should save these questions for when you are offered the job. Ask something about the job or the organization such as what a typical day is like, what your responsibilities would be, whom you would report to, or advancement opportunities. Remember, this is your opportunity to find out if this employer is right for you too!

At the end of the interview, if you want the job, ask for it! You can say something like, "I think this seems to be a really great place to work and the job seems to be a great fit for me. I would like to have this job." ☺